

Testimony for Public Hearing

Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2015

Tommi L. DeMichael

89 Colburn Road

Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Tommi DeMichael and I am a student at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and I am from Stafford. The Governor's proposed budget cut to higher education would be incredibly detrimental to the students; I am asking that you reconsider the budget cuts to our state's public colleges and universities.

Many students at the community colleges in Connecticut are already juggling working, being caregivers to their families, and their school work. Students are already struggling with tuitions costs and if they were to be risen more, it would affect the accessibility of college to many of Connecticut's citizens.

The financial strain of an increase in tuition would be another obstacle thrown in the path of student success. Additionally, if the proposed budget resulted in reduction to faculty members and available resources at our colleges, students would be greatly impacted. Appropriate faculty advising is something that students are pleading for; less faculty would mean greater class sizes, less course offerings, and an even more overburdened advising system for students. Students genuinely enjoy their experiences and the opportunities afforded to them at Connecticut colleges and universities, but with an increase in tuition combined with a decrease in resources and services, students will begin to look elsewhere for finishing their education. This is especially true with schools near state borders such as Asnuntuck.

Between academics and activities, I have had an excellent experience at Asnuntuck Community College. I've had so many professors and faculty members truly take an interest in me and my goals and that has made a huge impact on my education and the person I am today. I firmly believe that Asnuntuck and our other community colleges should be able to focus on expanding academic opportunities and development experiences offered to students, not shrinking them. Budget cuts should not be made in the higher education sector – our institutions need financial support more than ever to help students succeed. I would appreciate your support and careful consideration to this issue that will impact students statewide, now and in the future.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tommi DeMichael